

Hidden Beauty.

Once a rival entreated that Guido,
Bologna's great painter, would tell
Where he found the fair models whose beauty
Was shown on his canvass so well.

Then, for answer, he summoned a servant,
Whose visage, sin scarred and attaint,
By the brush of the master was altered
To the sweet, holy face of a saint.

And he said: If the visions discovered
To the eye of the spirit be fair,
The artist who fain would paint beauty,
His models will find everywhere.

Some glimpse of a glory immortal
In all that we say will appear,
If the mists of this life do not blind us,
And the sight of the spirit is clear.

—Catharine S. Holmes.

The Character of Christ's Teachings.

G. W. NEFF.

Let us inquire into the characteristics of the teachings of Christ, that afford help and consolation, and give courage and inspiration, if we believe in him, which none other teaching does afford. The philosophers think that the principles they set forth are true. They speak argumentatively, but Christ speaks as one having authority, and not as the Scribes. They do not pretend to know, but only to suppose. Christ says we testify what we have seen and do know. They claim only to have reached a higher degree of probity, by human effort; reaching up and striving in its own strength to solve the mystery of life and death. He declares no human wisdom, but claims himself to have come from God, and brought his teaching with him. Where he condemns human teachings, they are condemned; where he sets the seal of his approval upon them they receive an assurance of validity they had not before. They were notes issued—now they have become notes endorsed by the highest possible authority—God who created this world and sustains it. Whatever may occur, he is Almighty, and will always remain at the head of affairs. Nothing can occur without his permission. He is wise and good, as well as powerful and able, ultimately to accomplish his purposes, and that all this seeming trouble and confusion and distress is but a small part of the grand scheme which, when finally perfected in the ages, shall completely justify his wisdom and goodness and render praise to the glory of God. That this life is not the flight of a swallow through a lighted room, from the darkness without into the darkness again; but that which we call life is but the childhood of immortality; a childhood whose limited capacity does not permit us fully to comprehend the providence, the purposes and methods of the infinite Father, and therefore bids us trust his wisdom and his love, and Christ gives us a way or directions to live in such a way as to avoid a large part of the evil that afflicts men, in such a way as to live pleasantly and lovingly one with another. To aid in the development of our souls to a higher spiritual condition; to enjoy in proportion to our development, that joy which comes from being in harmony with the divine will; how to use God's blessings, and even the trials and afflictions that come to us in such a way as to work out for us and for others a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; to be delivered from disbelief, from the torture and suspense of doubt, to catch an inspiration of the divine life that extends through the universe and through the ages, that lifts those who obtain it on a higher plane, and saves from sin. This is Salvation: To know God and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. This is eternal life, and if we turn from Christ, to whom shall we go for it?

If we turn to other teachers, and say they have some of the same things,—if they have not all these same things, we need what he has still to supply their lack. If they have some of the same things, they either borrowed them of him, or his approval has set them the stamp that marks their validity and worth.

He who accepts Christ still has his trials. He is not delivered from all tribulations, conflict and sorrow. It is not best that he should be, for, whom the Father loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son in whom he delighteth.

It is necessary for the development of our nature, and although it will stop our darkness and trouble, we may not understand all about it. It will be made plain some day, when we part from these dear ones. We weep with sorrow, with a tenderness and a longing that cannot be expressed, but not with a feeling of despair. But with that sweet sorrow that is like purifying fires. Jesus himself wept at the tomb of Lazarus. Though he knew he would soon call him from the tomb, he manifested the divine sympathy. Our friends sympathize with us in our affliction, and Christ sympathizes with us. What a consolation it is to feel that God cares and sympathizes with us.

Those who go out from us, still live and still love us. They are still in a state where God rules—still in the school of discipline and developing into higher conditions of spiritual life. When the short days of pilgrimage are over, it will be but a little while at most for any of us. Then we shall go to another scene where, under God's law and God's love, we shall continue, and there the loved ones will meet us with friends, who have gone before, and we shall be reunited to love each other, and to learn more and more, and more and more admire and praise the wisdom and goodness of God, through ages that shall have no end; and if our way here be rough and weary, and we long to go before our time, the divine voice speaks to us: not now, my child; a little more rough tossing. This gospel of Jesus, it is the word of eternal life. It will strengthen, sustain, encourage and inspire us in joy and in sorrow, in life and in death. To whom, O Jesus, but unto thee, shall we go. Thou hast the words of Eternal life.

A Hard Question.

In a Southwestern town an aged minister was holding a revival meeting. There was great interest still manifested when the time came that the minister was obliged to go away to other fields of labor. He tried in vain to find some other preacher to take charge of the meeting. The last night of his stay he called to him a lawyer who was a member of the church, and said to him, "You must continue this meeting. There is no more preaching needed. Prayer, reading the Scriptures, and instructing the inquirers is all that is wanted, and you can do that."

In a very positive way the lawyer refused. The preacher pressed the matter, but the lawyer was immovable.

Finally the preacher said to him, "I can be here at the prayer meeting in the morning, and I want you to go to your room and settle one question to night before you sleep, and then come and report to me tomorrow morning the result. That question is, *How much of the life that you are living day by day is for Jesus?* Will you do that?" The lawyer said he would. So he went to his office, closed the door, and took up the question. The more he studied it, the more it troubled him. "The life I live day by day. Why, so far as I can see, there is none of it for Jesus. I plead law to make money and to make a reputation. I never thought about pleading law for Jesus. But I did promise, when I became a Christian, to be all Christ's forever. Yes, I promised, but that was the end of it. Practically, as a matter of fact, I belong to the world. The world, as it looks on me from day to day, sees only a man of the world. My Christianity is in name only."

The matter grew serious. The lawyer walked the floor and groaned in spirit. Finally, after many a long struggle he knelt down there before God, saying, "Now, O Lord, forgive the past, and give me grace to carry out my purpose, and henceforth, day by day, in secular interests or home interests or church interests, I will live for my Savior, and for him only."

Next morning he told the old minister to appoint a meeting for that night. He had never led in prayer, never made a public talk on religious subjects, but God was with him that night and has been with him ever since. Many precious souls have been led by him to the Savior since that memorable night. There is no reason to believe that a single one ever claimed him as spiritual father before that night.

Reader, will you take the old preacher's question

home with you, and settle it in regard to your own life?—By B. W. McDONNOLD.

Spoiled Church Members.

We meet spoiled children almost in every locality. Their peculiarities, waywardness, and peevishness attract general attention. Now if we consider the church as the great family of God, I am afraid we will have to acknowledge there are a great many spoiled children to be found there. Generally speaking these spoiled children are very troublesome. They have to be petted and carried along, or else they will be found continually pouting and fretting, and consider themselves the worst abused and neglected people in the world. They are very easily offended at their fellow church members, or even the pastor, and then they go off by themselves and mope, and absent themselves from church, Sunday school, &c. They expect the minister to visit them frequently and condole with them over every little sore, and expect soft words from all around them. When their little wounds are healed over, it is not long before they want the same healing process repeated.

They are very badly spoiled, and by being treated as weak little children, their case will only grow worse. It would be immensely better for themselves and the church, if they would so conduct themselves that everybody could treat them as intelligent men and women. Their whinings, fault-findings, and continual complaints keep everybody around them in a constant fever and anxiety, pouting and soothing their imaginary wounds. The best antidote to their spoiledness and its consequent aggravating symptoms is a regular system of strong manly treatment—and that in large, strong doses. The medicine may be too strong, and they may die under its administration, but the church will sustain no loss. If, however, they survive the treatment, they may become very useful members of the church and be of some use to the world.

M.

An Old Disciple.

An interview with Paul "the aged" prisoner in Rome, or with the "beloved" disciple old and lonely in his banishment, would have been delightful and certainly of great spiritual benefit. On a winter day in 1886, I was moved by a desire to honor an old disciple, a preacher of the gospel over fifty years, who traveled a circuit of four hundred miles, with thirty-two appointments a month, and is now eighty-eight years old, and as he said, "I am living in sight of heaven, and when life's last hour will come I shall, a redeemed sinner, washed in the blood of the Lamb, find there an eternal home." This old disciple is Rev. C. Flinchbaugh, of Cleves, Ohio, a retired United Brethren itinerant, enjoying a blessed old age in his own comfortable and pleasant home, sharing the loving care and faithful ministrations of his beloved wife with the respect, love, and sympathy of all his neighbors. He enjoys remarkable vigor of mind and strength of body; is very cheerful, and always pleased with the visits of his friends, old and young, and delighted with religious conversation, singing, and prayer. In every way the dear old disciple is bringing forth fruit in his declining years. He is a bright example of the happy Christian patiently awaiting the will of his Lord. He loves to recount the wonders of God's providence and grace as enjoyed during his prolonged and wonderful pilgrimage. When he warms up in conversation, the old fires that have glowed in his soul for sixty years, since his conversion in a corn-field, burn with the heat and power of his first love for Jesus Christ his God and Savior, and for the Holy Ghost that renews his nature, and still remains a divine indwelling spirit, sealing him for the heavenly inheritance. He loves the church he has so long and faithfully served. His toil and sacrifices in its behalf are now his crowning joy, and the occasion of thanksgiving to God who called him to the service and upheld him by the arm of his power, so that his ministry, preaching Christ and him crucified, won hundreds of precious souls from sin to God, from the world to the church, and from earth to heaven. His rich experience, his genial spirit, and his love for the brethren is clearly, vigorously, and lovingly expressed, is a feast for the soul and helpful to the Christian in growing in grace and in consecration to the whole-hearted service of a saved soul to the claims of the crucified, the Captain of his salvation.

A PRESBYTERIAN.